UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/631
S/1997/70
23 January 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL
TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 23 January 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The delegation of Lebanon wishes to convey to you its great indignation at the contempt for international public opinion that is shown in the letter dated 2 January 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/51/769-S/1997/6). In it, Israel seeks to invoke the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law in order to characterize attacks made against it as terrorism. In so doing, it ignores and attempts to make public opinion overlook the fact that it is forcibly occupying Lebanese territory in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law and that it is persisting in its occupation despite the numerous resolutions adopted by various United Nations organs calling upon it to withdraw.

Our indignation is increased by the fact that the letter also tries to invoke the Declaration on terrorism approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996 while ignoring the Organization's numerous resolutions on the right of peoples to resist occupation, in particular General Assembly resolution 50/6 of 24 October 1995, by which the Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, and General Assembly resolution 46/51 of 9 December 1991. The letter also seeks to ignore the fact that the forcible occupation of the territory of another State is the most serious form of organized international terrorism and violates all the human rights covenants and the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Under international law and in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council, particularly its resolution 425 (1978), it is Israel that is the aggressor State and one that has been occupying the territory of a neighbouring State for 19 years. In the resolution in question, the Security Council calls upon Israel to end its occupation, to cease its military actions against Lebanese territorial integrity and to withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory.

The actions that the representative of Israel refers to as acts of terrorism are acts of resistance to occupation that take place inside Lebanese territory and are directed against military elements of the occupation forces. They are a legitimate expression of the right to self-defence enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and they have the goal of liberating national territory from foreign occupation. The history of modern States is based for the most part on wars of resistance and liberation.

Lebanon has expressed its readiness to ensure security and the rule of law in southern Lebanon immediately on the withdrawal by Israel of its occupying forces in implementation of resolution 425 (1978), and this has been conveyed by its senior representatives in the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council and in many official statements issued by the Lebanese Government.

It is the maintenance of the Israeli occupation that is the basic reason for the existing tension in the area and that has caused so many human tragedies and so much destruction and suffering for the Lebanese. The logic of Israeli security policy has demonstrably failed to achieve security and stability in the area and on the two sides of the border.

Action in accordance with international legitimacy is the only way to ensure stability, security and peace for the peoples of the region.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Samir MOUBARAK
Ambassador
Permanent Representative